

# A Word of Advice

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To all such as are going on in SIN, and more particularly to my Neighbours and Townsmen in and about Colchester, to forsake their Evil Ways, and turn to the Lord while they have time, with a Word of Incouragement to such as Mourn for want of Salvation.

And a Word of Advice to the Priests of this Nation, that they choak not the tender desires that are begotten in People after Holiness.

I Have been concerned many a time on your behalf who still lyes in wickedness, with cries and tears to my God, that you might be gathered into a Sence of your Condition, how it stands between God and your Souls: For many of you seem to have a profession of Godliness, and to change from one Religion unto another, but I desire you in the Love of God, that as you change your Religion you may also change your Lives and Conversations, and so serve God in earnest in your day and Generation. You young ones especially who were my Companions in Wickedness, I have been concerned for you many a day, that as I have found Mercy at the hand of God, you may find it also. For I know by experience that God is Merciful, and slow to anger, as ever he was, if he had not I had surely been in a miserable State, as I fear many of you are, and yet would be called Christians. But examine your selves, have you learned of Christ by his Spirit, who said, *Learn of me, I am meek and low in heart*; this is the Teacher I was directed to, after I had heard many Teachers who Teach for Money, and would say there was no living without Sin in this Life, which is an incouragement to Youth to go on in Sin (and so it was to me) till this Teacher that cannot be removed into a Corner condemn'd me for Sin, and never consented to Sin, neither in you nor me) Come examine a little and acquaint your selves with God and beat peace, some perhaps may be so blind (as I was) to say where or how can I acquaint my self with God. I will tell thee, the Prophet Amos said, *he that shews unto man what his thoughts are, the Lord the God of Hosts is his name*: Now, thou needst not go to any man to teach thee, but try what the Spirit of God can do for thee, whoever thou art when thou art tempted to do evil by the Devil or his Servants, then try whether he that searcheth thy heart, and shews unto thee thy evil be not able, if thou be truly willing to forsake it, to keep thee out of the evil; none that truly trust in God dare say the contrary, but will be ready to say as Joseph did when he was tempted by his Mistress, *how can I do this evil, and sin against God*, Oh that I could see you my acquaintance and others to be afraid to sin against God, and if we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light then have we fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin. This is a better fellowship then you and I had in our Wickedness, which as we come to know, then shall we be ready to say to one another, Come hither and I will tell you what God hath done for my Soul, and this little Experience of the Dealings of the Lord in your selves is better then all hear say of him: Therefore seek the Lord while he may be found and call upon him while he is near, for the Lord hath said my Spirit shall not always strive with man. Therefore do not mock at the Spirit of God, nor at them that are guided by it, for as the Scripture saith, *he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his, and they are the Sons of God, that are led or guided by the Spirit of God*. Thus with Examination with lowliness of mind, you may know whose Servants you are, surely his to whom you yield your Members Servants to obey, whether it be of Sin unto Death, or Obedience unto Righteousness: Come you young ones serve God, and fear him, and then you will begin to be wise, *For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of true wisdom, and to depart from Iniquity is a good understanding*. Therefore first seek the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof, and all other things shall be added. For the Lord knows such as truly seek him, and that goes bowed down in Spirit all the day of what profession fiever, through the Sence of the weight of their Iniquity, and that mourns for want of Gods Salvation, and that desires to find peace with him. If you fear God, and work Righteousness you shall be accepted of him; but if you be Swearers, Lyers, Whoremongers, Drunkards, or proud persons, then remember that no unclean thing can enter into Gods Kingdom.

Therefore you that are young and would be Gods Children, bend your necks to the Yoak of Christ in the days of your youth. For if I should ask you when you would be willing to serve God, it may be some of you would be ready to say in your old Age, but how many do we see are taken away in their Youth and in their Sins. It would be more commendable in the sight of Men, and much more acceptable in the sight of God, to see young Men and Women walk in the Truth, and remember their Creator in the days of their Youth, least the evil day come upon them and overtake them as unawares: Therefore awake unto righteousness, and consider what the Lord hath done for you in Sparing you unto this day. Do you think it was for any desert of yours, No it was his love in preserving us hitherto, when other Nations and Countries have been distressed with Wars and Earthquakes: And how have some of you been ready to make promise when the Judgements of the Lord seemed to be coming upon you as when the Earthquake was here; and also when there was a report raised of the Irish being coming, and also since of the French being Landed upon our Coast; at the hearing whereof many went Crying about the Streets, and wringing their Hands; and some promising to live a better life, if the Lord would preserve them; and some upon a Bed of sickness have made promises to the Lord, that if he would restore them again, they would serve him in newness of Life. Friends, as this may come to any of your hands, who in times of Distress have been making such promises before the Lord when your hearts have been tendered by his Judgements; see to it, that you keep your Promises and look unto him, and he will look unto you; for he hath promised & said, *that unto that man will I look that is of a broken heart, and contrite spirit and that trembles at my Word*: He wills not the death of a Sinner, but rather that he should repent and live; but the way to life is by taking up a daily Cross, and denying thy self; Thy will to vain Delights, may be to Gaming, Sporting and Pastimes, so called, and sometimes when thy old

Companions are at ease in these things, doing them willingly; then the Devil may be ready to tempt thee, who in some Measure may be gathered out of them; to return back to them again, and if thou do not join with them, they may laugh at thee and say, why can you not do as you used to do. Now thou my fellow Traveller, this is my Testimony for the Lord, that if thou keepest low before him, he will give thee victory over them all, and they shall be ashamed (for Righteousness exalts a Nation, but sin is a reproach and shame to any people) and thou mayest be a Preacher of Righteousness in thy Life and Conversation, wherever thou comes, and thy Yea will be thy Yea, and thy Nay, Nay; and if some things seem hard for thee; then look to the Lord, and he will make hard things ease, and rough things plain, and all things will work together for good, if thou truly love and fear the Lord, and he will bless thee in thy goings out, and in thy coming in; and thus if thou keep thy Eye single to the Lord, thy whole Body will be full of Light, and thou wilt see thy prosperity in thee truth, and give God the Honour, unto whom it doth belong, both now, henceforth and for evermore.

And all you Priests of this Nation, of what sort soever, where you meet with any tender hearted People, that are breathing after the Sincere milk of the Word of God, which gives spiritual Satisfaction to the Mourners: I warn and intreat you to have a care of stifling these desires that are begotten in them, for these are as the hindmost of the Flock of God, therefore be not found seizing upon them as the Amalekites did, for some of you to my knowledge have sought to hinder the Light and Truth from shining, and have been offended with me when I have said, that if we followed and obeyed Christ, he was able to keep us out of Sin in this Life, for he was called Jesus, because he should save his People from their Sins, (not in them) and why should any be dissatisfied that we extol the love and strength of God, for we do not say we can save our selves from one Sin, nay we cannot think a good thought, and yet in and through him there is a possibility to do all things that he requires of us, as the Apostle said, *through him that strengthens us we are able to do all things*, and if so, then to live free from sin in this Life, which is my desire for you as for my self, that so through his cleansing power you may come to know it, and so enjoy that peace that passeth all understanding.

Your Friend in the Truth JOHN HAILES.

Colchester the 3d. of the 6th. Month 1693.

## POSTSCRIPT.

Having for long time gone with a bowed down Spirit before the Lord, to see sin and wickedness, abound in this Age and time, and to see that many both Priests and People do conclude that it is impossible to live without sin on this side the Grave, which is not only a great contradiction to the Scriptures, but doth also cast contempt upon Jesus Christ, who was sent for that very purpose to save his People from their sins, Mat. 1. 21. It reflects upon him, as if he were not able to finish the work that his Father gave him to do, which was to destroy the Work of the Devil (whose work it is to cause People to sin) 1 John 3. 8. It is therefore in my heart to answer three or four Objections which are commonly made against those that say that there is a possibility through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to live without or be free from sin in this life. The first Objection is from Proverbs 24. 16. *for a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again*: Now if people would seriously weigh these words, they would find that those words make nothing to their Purpose, for the Text doth not say, that a just man sinneth seven times, &c. but that he falleth seven times and riseth up again: Understood of troubles and temptations. James 1. 2. Rejoice when ye fall into temptations (or trials;) such a fall must this be understood to be; which is the trying Lot of all good men at one time or other; And it is no sin to be tempted but to be overcome with the temptation, which the just man that feareth God is not; for his God upholds him by his hand, Psalms 37. 24. and succours him in his tempted state, Heb. 2. 18. And with the temptation makes out a way for his escape, 1 Cor. 10. 13. and he riseth again, as saith the Scripture or Text. So though he falls, which fall is into temptation, yet he is not overcome; but by the Divine help of the Divine Power does stand his tryal and becomes a Victor.

Object. 2. But John saith, John 1. 8. *If we say we have no sin we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us*, Answer, so James saith Chap. 3. v. 9. Concerning the Tongue, saying, therewith blest we God, and therewith curse we men. I hope no man will be so rash to conclude that the Apostle was a Curser but it was the manner of the Apostles to condescend so for the sake of the weak, to rank themselves amongst them, and so put the word [we] instead of [you] so no more then the Apostle James was a Curser, nor John then a sinner, for he bends his whole Epistle against sin.

Object. 3. But Paul cryed out he was a wretched man, and askt the Question who should deliver him. Rom. 7. 24.

Answer. Paul was a telling the State he was in in times past, as doth appear, for when he had asked the Question, who should deliver him, he answered the Question himself, saying, Thanks be to God who hath given me the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. So he could not be a wretched man and Victor over sin, and all at the same time, 1 Cor. 15. 57. the Consideration of these things dear Reader, I leave unto thee, and leave thee to the heart melting Power of God, that is able to change and save thy Soul.

Farewell.